



COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

June 1, 2011

Contact: Dawn Nielsen (858) 694-2775

COUNTY AGRICULTURAL COMMISSIONER BOB ATKINS RETIRES

Lisa Leondis named as Acting Commissioner/Sealer

San Diego County Agricultural Commissioner and Sealer of Weights and Measures, Bob Atkins, has retired effective May 27, 2011, after 38 years of service to the agricultural communities of Los Angeles and San Diego.

In 1975 Commissioner Atkins found the first Mediterranean fruit fly in California and later worked to eradicate the same fruit fly in a series of five quarantines in San Diego County from 2008 – 2010. He also led a local, cooperative effort to eradicate the Mexican fruit fly and Japanese beetle, and battled the insidious Asian citrus psyllid and light brown apple moth.

During his five-year tenure in San Diego County, Commissioner Atkins was given an Honorary Lifetime Membership of the San Diego District of the Pest Control Operators of California after his successful efforts to create partnerships with the structural pest control industry. He was very active in state and federal legislation, and through the California Agricultural Commissioners and Sealers Association (CACASA) helped to secure much needed Pest Detection and Exclusion funding, including Detector Dog Teams in California. Two of those teams are now established in San Diego County.

Commissioner Atkins worked tirelessly during the last year of his career as both President of CACASA and Agricultural Commissioner/Sealer for San Diego County.

County Deputy Chief Administrative Officer, Sarah Aghassi, has appointed Agriculture, Weights and Measures Assistant Director, Lisa Leondis, to serve as Interim Agricultural Commissioner/Sealer while the County searches for a permanent replacement. Ms. Leondis possesses all of the required licenses to be qualified to act as the Commissioner/Sealer and has more than 20 years of experience with the department.

###